

Is anything left of the swinging sixties?

TWO of the major fashion influences of the swinging sixties sadly bowed out yesterday in the bankruptcy court.

Ossie Clark and Thea Porter joined the ever-growing list of designers who have been hit by the recession and have found it impossible to keep sufficient cash pumping into their companies.

It was said at the opening of the rock musical Hair that most

of the audience were dressed by Thea Porter. She made hippies not only respectable, but regal. Princess Margaret adored her things.

Ossie Clark dressed Beatles' wives, Marianne Faithfull, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw and Clodagh Rodgers.

In fact, every singing star's appearance seemed to be fashioned by him. And in the early seventies, through a public company called

Radley, he made dresses for the masses.

His crash is yet another indication of how the sixties differed to now.

For it is not just a recession and the lack of customers that has hit the fashion business. The whole feeling has changed.

The flamboyance and extravagance attached to the clothes made by people like Ossie and Thea is needed by very few people today.

While Ossie Clark's business was backed by MAK Industries and Arab money, Thea Porter remained small, carrying on business with her well-known and star-studded customers.

One of their main problems was lack of a healthy cashflow.

For, before the dresses appear in the shops, there has to be cash for fabric, cutters, seamstresses, packers, agents as well as machinery and administration.

Ossie Clark has gone bankrupt with a full order book—because there was too long a gap between designing the clothes and getting the money from sales back into the bank.

LESLEY EBBETTS
Fashion



An Ossie Clark slip

CLOSE-UP

NEUTRON BOMB

Reagan backs the generals

THE introduction of the neutron bomb to the growing arsenal of nuclear weapons in Europe would be a decisive victory for the generals.

But they face a much tougher battle if they are to win over public opinion.

In the present American mood of belligerence, President Reagan needed little persuasion that the growth and quality of Russian armour was outpacing NATO's ability to hold the line.

But Margaret Thatcher and her Euro-partners will be playing a much more dangerous political game if they go along with this thinking.

There is already growing opposition to the arrival of nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. They will be based in Britain from 1983, which will probably be the run-up to a General Election.

The neutron bomb would undoubtedly be

stored here, too. It is a quick-response weapon which would be of little use on the other side of the Atlantic.

At the moment, the Government is thought to be in favour of the bomb, which will be discussed when Mrs. Thatcher visits Washington later this month.

Scientists and military chiefs have been making soothing noises in public.

In Whitehall, one boffin dismissed criticism as "emotional nonsense."

He would, he said, prefer Fleet Street to talk of "reduced blast weapons" instead.

Military experts claim that the case for the bomb is overwhelming.

Russia can now put 50,000 battle tanks into the field. That is a



The Lance missile... neutron bomb carrier.

superiority of almost three to one.

A neutron shell exploded a few hundred feet above them would use only a fifth of its energy in destructive blast. Buildings a hundred yards away would probably survive.

Soldiers would be doomed. In a one-second pulse of radiation, neutrons would pierce steel as though it were wallpaper.

The bomb's supporters point out that it would leave water, sewage, electricity and other installations ready to re-start some sort of life—whatever was the winner.

And France has been quietly and successfully carrying out tests to perfect its own neutron bomb.

ELLIS PLAICE

COMPREHENSIVE Head who hit back

THE first time Peter Dawson looked out of his study window at Eltham Green Comprehensive in London he saw dozens of exercise books fluttering down from the fifth floor of the science block.

On the terrace below the main building was a graveyard of shattered desks and chairs that had been tossed out of the windows. None of the staff dared venture on to the terrace, which was known as bomb alley.

That was the baptism Mr. Dawson endured when he arrived as the new headmaster of a school with the reputation of being one of the roughest in Britain.

But in ten years he has transformed it into an impressively successful comprehensive.

At first, abuse and violence against teachers was rife. Window smashing cost £4,000 a year and smaller children were regularly thrown into the ornamental pools. Now order prevails... thanks to the toughness and dedication of Mr. Dawson.

He tells of the big transformation in his book out today called *Making a Comprehensive Work*.

Headmasters, he says, should rule, teachers teach and children obey.

CHARLES LYTE

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